

News releases - John Rau

New child protection laws to be introduced to Parliament this week

John Rau

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Laws governing South Australia's new child protection system will be debated in Parliament this week, as the State Government continues its overhaul of the child protection system.

Minister for Child Protection Reform John Rau will introduce the Government's *Children and Young People (Safety) Bill 2017* to Parliament.

The Bill will replace the current Children's Protection Act and ensures the safety of children and young people is the paramount priority above all else, while giving a voice and better representation to children and young people under guardianship in decisions that will affect their lives.

The move comes ahead of the appointment of South Australia's first Commissioner for Children and Young People, which is expected in coming weeks.

Background

As part of the extensive consultation process to develop its response to the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, the Government sought feedback from the non-government sector, service providers, peak bodies and community members with a strong involvement in the child protection system to inform its response.

The draft Bill was released for consultation in November last year, with public comment closing late last month. In addition to strengthening the focus on child safety, the new Bill also recognises the importance of foster carers in supporting children who are at risk.

This will be achieved by increasing the rights of foster carers and their involvement in decisions made by the Department for Child Protection and any subsequent matters heard by the Youth Court. Foster carers will also be able to apply to South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for an independent review of decisions made by the Chief Executive.

Quotes attributable to Child Protection Reform Minister John Rau

The Child Protection Systems Royal Commission recommended nothing less than a complete overhaul of our child protection laws and this is what we are delivering.

This Bill will help underpin the fundamental shift in the delivery of child protection services in South Australia and support the cultural changes needed that were highlighted by Margaret Nyland in her report.

I will be seeking to progress this as a matter of urgency in Parliament, to ensure we can continue the work needed to deliver a new, stronger child protection system to benefit those children and young people who need our support.

Quotes attributable to Education and Child Development Minister Susan Close

Our goal has always been to develop a system that puts children at the front and centre of our decision making.

This Bill has been developed in close consultation with the non-Government sector, peak bodies, service providers and others who have a strong involvement in our child protection system and I thank them for their ongoing collaboration as we work to bring about significant reform within the child protection system.

These measures will complement our increased focus on early intervention and other measures aimed at giving a stronger voice and stronger supports to all children and young people – including the establishment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.